THEOLOGY OF A MODERN METHODIST

RAYMOND HUSE

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LETTERS ON THE ATONEMENT

THE SOUL OF A CHILD

Theology of a Modern Methodist

By
RAYMOND HUSE

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AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY

DEDICATED TO

SAMUEL F. UPHAM

MY TEACHER AND FRIEND

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	How the Talk Started	9
II.	The Trinity	15
III.	The Fatherhood of God	26
IV.	The Atonement	37
V.	The Holy Spirit	49
VI.	The Bible	60
VII.	Conversion	70
VIII.	Entire Sanctification	81
IX.	Prayer	90
X.	What Is the Teaching of Jesus About Hell?	103
XI.	What Do We Know About Heaven?	116

I. HOW THE TALK STARTED

It was at a new-fashioned Methodist love feast. Our readers are doubtless familiar with this particular ecclesiastical function. Not the plain, simple Sunday morning church, but the brilliantly lighted church parlors on a Wednesday evening. Not the bread and water, but cake and ice cream, passed, not by humble, awkward stewards, but by prettily gowned, graceful, and smiling young women. This particular contrast is mentioned not for commendation or criticism. We confess to a decided preference for the cake and ice cream ourselves, but if the simple cube of bread, by its very simplicity, emphasized the symbol of fellowship in the church, which was surely the meaning of the primitive love feast, that is certainly in its favor.

At one of the tables was seated a

group of men, for the most part official members of the church, gravitating together as men of common interests will on such occasions in spite of all the diligence of social committees to keep folks circulating. It is not necessary for the purposes of this story that the reader be formally introduced to each man in the group. Two or three of them, however, because of their prominence in what is to follow, must be especially mentioned.

That alert, well-groomed, virile man is a commercial traveler and a trustee in the church. He has none of the swagger and little of the slang of the old-time drummer. He wears the blue button of the Gideons on his lapel and is alive in every drop of his red, tingling blood. He is worth knowing.

Sitting opposite him was a thoughtful-looking, youngerly man, who is superintendent of the mills in our city. His countenance bears the anxious look of a man who knows that

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

There were, besides a young physician, several business men—twelve in all, including the district superintendent of the church and a theological professor. This latter was as great a contrast to the old-fashioned specimens of the particular genus—at least as they are popularly pictured—as the social function at which they were present was to the old-time love feast. In his case, however, we cease to be neutral and declare the contrast to be all in his favor. He was not begoggled nor absent-minded. Every flash from his clear eye and every ring in his manly voice, without his meaning to, advertised the fact that he was interested not in dead things but in life! His name, and it is the only name we need bother our brains to remember, was Professor Paul.

They were talking about old-time Methodist customs. "By the way," said the Commercial Traveler, "what has become of the class meeting?"

"I have a church in my district," replied the District Superintendent, with a touch of pride, "that has two—one of them very flourishing."

"Tell us about it!" said several in chorus.

"There isn't much to tell. There is a good leader and they have what some magazine has called 'good times in religion.'"

"But, honestly, now," persisted the Commercial Traveler, "do they have a real, old-time class meeting? I mean, do they bring their problems of thought and faith and experience, and really talk them out and get help, or do they have simply a testimony meeting, differing only from the ordinary prayer meeting in the fact that the selective draft is substituted for the volunteer system and the leader sprinkles in large

doses of extemporaneous encouragement?"

The District Superintendent acknowledged the description of the service was fairly accurate, and the Commercial Traveler continued: "What I would like would be a meeting where a man could really bring his problems and get help—not only the problems of his heart, but what is puzzling his head as well—and have somebody who is supposed to know"—with a meaning glance at Professor Paul—"tell him if the foundation stones are really uncracked!"

And that is how it started! Before they left that evening they had formed a class meeting of the old-fashioned apostolic size—twelve in number—with Professor Paul as leader.

"I have one request to make," said the Mill Superintendent, "and that is that we avoid speculative theology, that we keep always in mind that what we need to know is not so much about the

origin of evil and the creation of the universe as how to live."

"I want to put with that a request," retorted the Commercial Traveler, "that we do not steer so far away from Scylla as to smash into Charybdis. Sometimes I think some of these present-day philosophers have gone so far in the glib advice, 'Don't question, just smile,' that they have left us nothing to smile over."

"In order that we be saved from the sinful peril of empty extemporaneousness," said Professor Paul, "let us select our subject a week ahead each time. What shall we discuss next week?"

There was a thoughtful pause for a moment, broken by the Commercial Traveler with the words: "The Trinity."

II. THE TRINITY

THE place of meeting was Professor Paul's study. It was agreed that if books of reference were needed, it would be well to have them within reach, although there was also the general understanding that the retreat to written opinions of others should be the last resort. "Why consult Augustine and Calvin and Wesley, when we have Professor Paul right here?" exclaimed the Commercial Traveler. "If we don't agree with them, it won't do any good to say so, and if we don't agree with him, we can make him uncomfortably aware of it."

"Yet I shall be greatly surprised," remarked the District Superintendent, "if we do not find this library extremely useful. There is no use in our fussing to find the answers to some problems that are already settled. We are too

old to need the discipline, and it is a sinful waste of time."

"Moreover," said the Mill Superintendent, a little bashfully, "as I take it, a live book, if it be alive, by that very fact stirs to life every single brain it touches, as the life-giving winds of springtime make all the forest trees bud and bloom. I confess I am rather a dead stick myself sometimes, but when a good book blows its message into my soul I feel the sap rising all through me."

"I suppose that is what a young fellow was trying to say in Epworth League meeting"—and the good-natured smile that made the District Superintendent famous spread over his round face. "He said he thought that if more of the young people read Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, they would live more spiritual lives. I was inclined to be amused at first, and then as I saw the earnest expression on the young

man's clean-cut face, I saw it was no joke. Mark Twain is hardly a Sunday school teacher or an Epworth League institute director, but that young man evidently felt, even in his wild, whimsical stories, the beating of his great, true, human heart, and was made better by it."

"Amen!" said the Commercial Traveler. "Having secured this information as to the kind of books my studious colleagues propose to consult, I withdraw all objections."

After a few words of reverent prayer the question of the evening was presented. It was suggested that since the Commercial Traveler had proposed the subject he should open the discussion or ask the first question.

The Drummer and the Unitarian

"I suppose," he said, "I believe in the Trinity because I was brought up to believe so—and because"—and his voice became wistfully reverent—"I

somehow can't seem to explain what Christ means to a man like me without calling him God. But I acknowledge I have never seen an explanation of the case that didn't seem as crude as a camp-meeting bungalow; and when my neighbor, who is a Unitarian, tells me that his creed is more reasonable, and that is why it appeals to intellectual people, I usually try to change the subject. In fact, I get quite a spell of Unitarianism myself, and don't get over it until I hear the kid say his prayers at night—and when he says: 'This I ask for Jesus' sake,' and 'Dear Jesus, bless papa,' I get lumpy in my throat, don't care a hang about these intellectual people, and go downstairs and start the victrola playing my mother's favorite hymn: 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul.' "

"A doctrine may appear superficially reasonable or unreasonable," said Professor Paul, "and when you really explore its depths you find it to be quite

the reverse. You can't always judge the current of a river by the waters at the surface. If you were to mention the characteristics of God that make him worthy of our worship and our love, what qualities would you mention?"

Two replies were given almost immediately by practically every man present: "His righteousness," "His love."

"I think I would like to put one other quality with those," the Mill Superintendent remarked, "and I don't know as I know just how to describe it or just what to call it. What I mean is that while we are conscious of the fact that our love, and our holiness—what we have—is given us by our Creator, or derived from him, he has it himself. I rather guess I mean God is independent."

Professor Paul smiled. " 'Absolute' is the word the philosophers and theologians use—but 'independent' is a good

word. And now I think we have all the material we need to take up the question of the reasonableness of the doctrine of the Trinity. Start with that idea of the absolute, independent God, and now take up the quality of righteousness which has been mentioned. How can a person be righteous if there is nobody to do right by? Righteousness, like all our virtues, is a social quality. How can an absolute, lonesome God have righteousness at all, if he has *nobody to think of but himself?"*

"I suppose he may have been creating forever," said the Mill Superintendent; "but," he added, thoughtfully, "he could hardly be an independent God if he were dependent upon his creatures for the development of the very quality that makes us worship at all."

Father and Son

The face of Professor Paul lighted up with pleasure. "Exactly!" he ex-

claimed, "but if there have always been at the very heart of the universe a Father and a Son—each doing right by the other, you start life right side up. You fathers know that the kid in your home—I borrow our brother's modern vocabulary—brings out everlastingly the highest ideals of your life; while, on the other hand, if that quality, obedience, which is the foundation of personal and national character, is in the great soul of God himself, it is robbed of any flavor of despotism that would grate on the soul of modern democracy. If the eternal Son of the eternal Father is everlastingly saying, 'I do thy will, O God,' obedience becomes divine. And, according to this conception of God, you have in him a practical, everlasting, absolute righteousness—that makes us bow the knee."

"We are getting almost beyond my depth," exclaimed the Commercial Traveler, "but how about love?"

"Just the same. *You can't love un-*

less you have somebody to love. Think of a lonely, absolute God, all by his absolute lonesomeness in an empty universe, with nobody to love but himself. Can you get 'our Father who art in heaven' there? But all you need to have love is to have two—you know that. And if there have always been a Father and a Son, you can have love 'from everlasting to everlasting.' Do you remember what Jesus said, 'O righteous Father, thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world'? There you have it all.

"Of course I am not saying that if we had no other evidence, we could reason out the necessity for the Trinity. I don't know as we could reason out the necessity for life itself—but having it, being able to say with Saint John, 'Our fellowship is with the Father and with Jesus Christ, his Son'—we find, when we sound the depths, that the doctrine is philosophically sound and practically reasonable."

The Supreme Mystery

"I think the real difficulty with me," mused the Mill Superintendent, "is to get any clear conception in my mind as to how we can have that eternal, social Trinity you have so beautifully described and at the same time have but one God."

"Of course that has been the supreme mystery of orthodoxy," was the thoughtful reply, "but I have an idea that the simple, old-fashioned statement, 'God is love,' is the best key to the mystery. Love is a great unifier. You remember our old-fashioned valentines, 'Two hearts that beat as one'? I have heard that Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, by years of wholesome love, so grew into each other's life that the little mistress of Hawarden Castle used to say, 'Wherever I am and whatever I do, I am thinking of William.' Now, if human love will so unify, would not divine love make really one the Holy

Trinity? It was to the Trinity that blind George Matheson was praying when he said,

"'O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.'"

There was a reverent hush for a few moments, and then the Commercial Traveler said, "I don't know as I can really understand it any more than I can see across the ocean when I am down at my cottage by the shore—but I sort of feel the bigness of it, as if the billows were coming in."

"I think the doctrine of the Trinity, like all the doctrines of Christianity, is intended not so much to be explained as to be experienced," said Professor Paul. "The prayer of Jesus just before Calvary seems to teach us that love leads always toward unity, and that if we go along its shiny way we too fit into

the Trinity. Shall I read it as a fitting closing of our discussion? 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe in me through their word, that they all may be one. As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one.' "

III. THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

In spite of the original caution of Professor Paul, the men were so under the spell of the mood of the moment that no subject was announced for the following week.

However, although there was a driving storm outside, the twelve chairs circling the open fire in the roomy study were filled. A subject is a good thing for a meeting to have. An object is a more sure magnet, and this they had.

Mr. Britling's Theology

It was the District Superintendent who opened the discussion. He had been reading the theological attempt of H. G. Wells, the novelist.

"Professor Paul, what do you think of the book God the Invisible King?"

A bright smile illumined the Pro-

fessor's fine face. "I think," he replied, *"that Mr. Britling has not seen it through.*

"I read that book," he continued, "one September day as I rode on the steamer across Lake Winnepesaukee. It was a wonderful day—blue lake, blue mountains in the distance, blue sky overhead. I read the author's statement that the Veiled Being of nature has no connection with God, the Invisible King in our souls, and I said it is like saying that my mother's voice belongs to a different person from my mother's face. Mr. Wells is rather proud of the fact that he has quarreled with the theologians, but he has also quarreled with the poets, and that is too much like quarreling with God. Of course I cannot demonstrate in a cool, mathematical sense that the God of the hills and the God of the stars and the God of my soul are one—any more than I can that my mother's voice and my mother's face belong together. In

a sense, in both cases it is by faith we receive the unity, but to doubt it is the depth of folly."

"But all days are not like that September one on the lake," said the Commercial Traveler. "Take this stormy night, for instance. There are many cruel, grim things in nature. They don't seem much like the 'sweet peace, the gift of God's love,' we are supposed to have in our souls when we sing in prayer meeting."

The Professor's eyes twinkled. "I had some experiences with my mother, as a child, that didn't seem just like her lullaby songs at night. I didn't enjoy them, but there is an old Book which says 'that no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, but afterward it worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.' Now, before you sidetrack me from the thing I want to say by asking all about the suffering of the world I want to say, frankly, that I do

not see in nature alone a full revelation of the love of God—but we are not and never have been left with nature alone. We have always had somebody who knows to tell us about our Father-God. And when we know him we can trust him, even when 'dark is his path on the wings of the storm.'

"But to-night I am a little nervous of being interrupted until I finish my story. That day I was on my way to speak words of Christian comfort at the funeral of a beautiful young girl who had been suddenly called out of this life. And while thinking about it all I read what Mr. Wells had to say about immortality, that individual immortality, being a selfish thing, has no special part in real religion. I got his conception of God as a military King, marshaling his forces in age-long battle for the good of the race, in which soldiers fling away their lives forever for the good of the age to be! Then I thought of what Jesus taught about God being

a Father, watching every sparrow's fall and loving everlastingly every wistful soul—and I must say I preferred the teaching of Jesus. And when I saw the stricken mother, triumphant and strong in the faith in the Father and final home, I said what I have said to you now: 'Mr. Britling has not seen it through.' One would think in these democratic days of toppling thrones he would see that the very title, 'The Invisible King,' is antiquated, and that each day the race marches away from the kings toward democracy and peace we are coming nearer to the teaching of Jesus that God is the everlasting Father."

The Fatherly and Motherly Heart of God

"Then you believe in the universal Fatherhood of God?" asked the Mill Superintendent.

"The debate about the universal Fatherhood of God is largely a debate

of words," replied the Professor. "Generally speaking, these people are not talking about the same thing at all when they get so excited with each other. Of course, when we are talking about God we need to ever pray:

" 'A veil twixt thee and me, dread Lord,
A veil twixt thee and me,
Lest we should hear too clear, too clear,
And into blindness see.'

"We know very little about God. We are like children, playing by the ocean—but a man could not paint a beautiful picture unless he had the soul of the artist and a man could not write a beautiful song unless he had music in him—and God could not make mothers' hearts and fathers' hearts unless he were full of fatherliness and motherliness himself! That is why I feel bold to pray with Whittier, 'O God and Father of mankind,' and to pray as Jesus taught us, not, 'O King Invisible,' but 'Our Father who art in heaven.' "

"But does that not conflict a little with the idea of God as the stern Judge? Isn't that a little too soft for this evil generation?" queried the Mill Superintendent.

The Professor became really excited. His eyes flashed as he said: "I said God was a Father. I did not say he was a Grandfather." Then the quiet smile came again and he said: "You know I am a grandfather myself and I enjoy my grandchildren. I love them and cuddle them and coddle them, but the responsibility of bringing them up is not mine. I can overlook their little faults and think only of having a happy time with them—but their father can't and their mother doesn't. Their love for the children must be thoroughly saturated with moral responsibility, and sometimes that makes it pretty stern stuff. Moreover, God is everybody's Father. I have known some parents, if their own children did wrong—well, take an incident I know where a mother

had a son who deliberately ruined a white-souled girl, and that excused and coddled the son and blamed the girl. It was because, she would say, of her mother heart's pleading for her boy. Personally, I am inclined to think that there was more selfishness than real mother love in it, if it were properly analyzed, and God's holy Fatherhood is not thus adulterated—but be that as it may, God is just as much the Father of the girl as of the boy. He is everybody's Father. You will find no soft excusing there. He can't be that kind and be fair to all his children. No, I think what this evil generation you talk about needs is a *Father like God.* Do you remember Faber's hymn?—

"'All fathers learn their craft from thee,
All loves are shadows cast
From the beautiful eternal hills
Of thine unbeginning past.'

"That's my creed," and the Professor beamed on his listening guests.

God's Attitude Toward All Folks

"Then you do not accept the doctrine that the Fatherhood of God is only for the saints who have been adopted into his family?" said the District Superintendent.

"Of course," was the answer, "in all these things we are talking in metaphors. When I talk of the universal Fatherhood of God I mean his spiritual attitude toward folks. In just what sense we are his offspring I don't know, and it doesn't matter especially. Even in our human relationships it is only as they are spiritualized that they are vital. Some people are not truly fathers and mothers to their own offspring. Some adopted parents know some of the deepest depths of real fatherhood and motherhood. What I mean about God is that his spiritual attitude toward folks is that of a Father.

"As to limiting that attitude to a

particular class, building a high stone wall around it, and fencing it in for the saints—our human fatherhood and motherhood rebukes that notion. If your mother was like mine, because she had the mother heart she was only limited by her humanity from mothering every stray child on earth. God is that kind and God has no limits!

"Of course that does not mean that we are all children of God unless we choose to be. A body doesn't need to be a child of his earthly parents, in a real spiritual sense, unless he chooses to be. When God made us like himself he didn't leave us to be anything automatically. I shall never forget calling on a poor heart-broken mother at a county farm, whose prosperous son had left her there to pine her life away. He was her natural offspring, but he wasn't in a real spiritual sense her son. We can be that way with God. That's why I said at the beginning this discussion of the universal Fatherhood of

God is largely a debate of words. When a certain great evangelist says he is opposed to it he is protesting against a shirking of moral responsibility that comes from saying, 'God's my Father and I am his child, and I am all right, no matter how I behave.' In his protest he is exactly right. No man can rightly claim to be the son of God unless he has the filial spirit and performs the duties and meets the obligations of sonship. But what I am insisting on in all our talk is that we must think of God and all the doctrines of God in terms of Fatherhood. That is the teaching of Jesus, and is as far above the antiquated conception of a military monarch Mr. Wells attempts to resurrect as the heavens are high above the earth.

"And now let me suggest—perhaps it is the pedagogue in me that makes me —that we do the logical thing and discuss next week 'The Atonement.' "

IV. THE ATONEMENT

"I MAY as well state at the start," said the Mill Superintendent, after the brief and reverent devotional service, "my difficulty with the doctrine of the Atonement as I hear it preached and taught. *It doesn't 'arrive.'* I can see how, if God is absolutely just, these cheap, easy ideas of simply 'forgive and forget' faint away of their own superficiality. Justice demands that the penalty follow the sin. What I cannot see is how to have Christ or anybody else bear the penalty for my sin squares my account with justice. I have read the various attempts to explain it, to say that divine government can be upheld that way, and all that sort of thing, but it seems to me a strange and unfair government that can be upheld by punishing the innocent party."

"Suppose," replied the Professor, "that we start where we left off last week. The thing I tried to insist on then was that we think of God in terms of Fatherhood—moral, responsible Fatherhood. Now, you are a father yourself. Suppose your child does wrong, what are you thinking about in your dealings with him—satisfying absolute justice?"

"No," was the thoughtful reply. "I think my chief motive is the benefit of the child."

"And should God do less? Let us not forget that, first of all, he is and always has been a Father. Now, let us take a concrete case. Suppose your little lad has committed some deliberate piece of naughtiness and you determine that he needs to be punished; suppose he says what children—and older folks too, for that matter—say in such emergencies, 'I won't do it again'; and suppose you could read his heart and see there as complete a repentance and moral trans-

formation as if the punishment were inflicted—what would you do about it?"

"I think I would let the account with absolute justice go," and the Mill Superintendent smiled tenderly, "and hold a love feast."

The Purpose of Calvary

"Exactly—and that is what God does. The purpose of Calvary is not to balance the accounts with justice, but to secure the moral transformation of us wayward children of the everlasting Father. I am speaking all the time in an everyday, practical fashion, you understand, having never peeped at the books of the Infinite."

"Then the question simmers down to this," queried the Commercial Traveler, "how does the sacrifice of Christ make over folks?"

"Yes, and that is a long story," replied Professor Paul, "but a fairly simple one. I think it starts with the question a little girl asked her father

one time after a rather painful interview, *'O, papa, what makes me be so naughty when I want to be so good?'* The fact that the greatest battle we all have to fight in securing moral character and peace is with ourselves is proof that whatever we may think about the old-fashioned notion of original sin something ails us."

"Yes," interrupted the Commercial Traveler, "it is certainly the nature of most of us to be selfish. I have thought that it was 'the pure streak of cussedness' that every man possesses."

The Chastenings of Providence

"The second thing I want to speak about," continued Professor Paul, "is so old-fashioned that I am not sure how such a company of distinctly modern men as you will receive it. It goes back to that verse I quoted to you the other night about chastening not seeming pleasant, but grievous, but afterward working the peaceable fruit of

righteousness to those that are exercised thereby. We have been saying so much of late about punishment embittering rather than benefiting children on the one hand and criminals on the other, that, as I say, I fear what I say will not seem in harmony with the spirit of the age."

"Well," said the District Superintendent, "I suppose it is because so much of our punishment has been a bungling botch, prompted by the mood of the moment. I am sure, when I was a little rebel at home, my mother's spankings had a distinct moral benefit that has helped me ever since. I learned the majesty of obedience and really hated the sin that made me suffer."

"It's quite a leap from the District Superintendent's childhood to the nations of the world," remarked the Mill Superintendent, "but I wonder if as we study history we do not find the chastenings of Providence have saved many a nation from moral rottenness.

It seems to me the history of Israel especially is full of just such chapters."

"Now, then," said Professor Paul, "if the human family is full of selfishness, don't you see how a race-wide chastening might be needed? You will remember all the time that we are not trying to square accounts with justice. We are thinking of a Father seeking the moral transformation of his wayward children. Of course, if we were speaking of just balancing up with justice, we should have to take up the question as to why we should be chastened for selfishness in which we were born and which was born in us, but you see we might as well ask why Abraham Lincoln should have to work his way by sweaty toil from the log cabin to the White House. Why did he have to be born in a log cabin, anyway? Some things will have to be balanced up with immortal individuals in the next life, or what is eternity for? We may as well confess all the way along there are

a good many things we do not know. That was where the old-fashioned theologians got into trouble—they were very modest about acknowledging their ignorance. They thought they had got to pretend to understand everything.

One Suffering for Another

"The third thing I want to ask you to remember is that history is full of vicarious suffering—the innocent suffering for the guilty and glad to do it to make the world better. Do you remember these lines,

> "'A picket frozen on duty,
> A mother starving for her brood,
> Socrates drinking the hemlock,
> Jesus on the rood,
> And millions who, unnoticed,
> The steep hard path have trod—
> Some call it consecration,
> Others call it God.'

"Now, I want you to keep in mind the Fatherhood of God. If you are a

father—and most of you are—if there is any of the struggle, any of the pain and heartache that comes in the way of life that you can take yourself instead of your children having to endure, you will do it."

"Certainly," interrupted the Mill Superintendent. "Isn't that why we work night and day, so that they can have schooling and comforts and get along easier than we did?"

"In a nutshell," said Professor Paul, "the Atonement is our Father God doing the same thing for his children—but before I summarize it and answer the question 'How?' that is already forming on your lips, I want to ask you to remember one other big truth, and that is the benefit that comes to our lives from fellowship with others. You remember James A. Garfield said his idea of a college education was to sit on a log with Mark Hopkins. And while you toil that your children may be saved the burden and the bruises of

the long road, you hope that by fellowship with you they may secure some of the spiritual benefits that came to you from the burdens and the bruises.

"Now, put all we have said together. First, human selfishness making the battle for righteousness and peace a losing one; second, only the chastening of the Lord its cure; third, vicarious suffering one of the great facts of life and the Father heart of God prompting him to take as much of the pain into his own life as possible to save his children; fourth, the power of fellowship. This is, of course, but the background of the cross. The rest can be said very briefly, although every sentence is fateful. Jesus Christ is born into the human race, and because of his human heritage and his divine nature is in his own life aware of the downpull of the race's selfishness and sin. He knows it all from experience. In the same spirit of all great vicarious suffering he bows to the divine chastening. Human na-

ture in him is purged. By fellowship with him the lesson of it all is ours, and if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

"It wasn't just fair, was it, for Christ to suffer for us?" said the Mill Superintendent.

"No—but he chose to, as you fathers do for your children—and remembering our discussion of the Trinity, you will see the suffering and the cross were in the heart of the Father too—and the Holy Spirit also."

"That is what I have been wondering about," questioned the Commercial Traveler. "We started in talking about a Trinity, and so far we seem to speak merely of two. What of the Holy Spirit?"

"Next week," replied Professor Paul, "we will speak of the Holy Spirit."

"In the meantime," said the Mill Superintendent, "what is the account of absolute justice for my sins?"

Where Forgiveness Comes In

"I reckon it has never been paid," said the Professor. "That is where *forgiveness* comes in. Of course I want to say to you men that I do not pretend we have by infinite leagues sounded the depths of the mystery of the Atonement. We have simply considered its practical bearing on life. Let me read you what the great apostle, my namesake, says on the same subject:

" 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: . . . yet now henceforth know we him no more.

" 'Therefore if any man be in Christ,

he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' "

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT

At the fourth meeting of the class the pastor of the church was present. "He has so many pious gatherings to attend I didn't think he ought to come. I think he really needs something more frivolous, but I couldn't keep him away when I told him what we were doing," said the Commercial Traveler, as he piloted him in.

"He is surely welcome," and Professor Paul extended his hand of greeting. "I fear, however, for a preacher to attend a class like this on Monday evenings will be a good deal like the old stagecoach driver who said he took his vacation 'riding around with the other fellow.' "

"That is not so bad an idea of a vacation as it at first might seem," exclaimed the Pastor. "Seeing your own work go on without any responsibility for it."

"Well, you will see this class go on,

all right, and you surely will not have to drive," ventured the Mill Superintendent.

"To introduce the subject of the evening"—and Professor Paul's expressive face became rapt and reverent—"I wish to read, as our prayer, President Warren's matchless hymn:

"'I worship thee, O Holy Ghost,
I love to worship thee.
My risen Lord for aye were lost
But for thy company.

"'I worship thee, O Holy Ghost,
I love to worship thee.
I grieved thee long, alas, thou knowest
It grieves me bitterly.

"'I worship thee, O Holy Ghost,
I love to worship thee.
Thy patient love at such a cost,
At last it conquered me.

"'I worship thee, O Holy Ghost,
I love to worship thee.
With thee each day is Pentecost,
Each night Nativity.'

"I think I want to refer again, at the

start, to our friend Mr. Wells, whose book we discussed the other night. He is particularly savage about the doctrine of the Trinity and insists that it was forced upon the church by a council of ecclesiastical politicians, and that not until centuries after the establishment of the Christian Church. As a matter of fact, that is the way with all the doctrines of God—they are experienced first and stated afterward. Those old creeds, stilted and pedantic as they sound, were an honest attempt to account for the facts of Christian experience and history. A council can have no permanent power unless it expresses the sentiments of the people. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the last one a body would conjure up itself—least of all a group of ecclesiastical politicians. But they had some experiences with Pentecost to interpret."

Knowledge About the Holy Spirit

"My experience with people who

talk much about the Holy Spirit has not been very pleasant," said the Mill Superintendent. "I remember an institution in New England that is called 'The Holy Ghost and Us.' That is typical of the crudeness I have encountered. From these people I early gained the impression that the presence of the Holy Spirit is manifested by a nervous hysteria that keeps folks from being wholesome and normal. That is why I was particularly grateful for the reverent prayer of President Warren."

"Why don't we know more about the Holy Spirit?" asked the Commercial Traveler. "I confess I have a fairly clear picture of the Father and the Christ, but when it comes to the third Person of the Trinity I am in a fog bank. And most preachers I hear talk make the fog thicker. I heard one this summer waxing eloquent over the Holy Spirit, but he used the pronoun 'it' and seemed to be talking about some sort of spiritual electricity."

"I think it was Mr. Moody," replied the Professor, "who, with that native sense and spiritual intuition which made him sometimes great even as a theologian, spoke of the self-obliteration of the Holy Spirit. You remember that Jesus said of him that he should not speak of himself, but that the whole mission of his life should be to glorify the Christ. It is not, therefore, surprising that we should not know much about him. You should not, therefore, worry about your ignorance regarding the Holy Spirit. It is evidently part of the plan. I have never been very enthusiastic over these learned divisions of divine history into dispensations, but I do think God reveals himself according to our capacity to receive. To an age that insisted on thinking in terms of monarchies and kingdoms, he was revealed as the King of Glory. To an age that needed a lawgiver he was the great Judge. When the world could stand it we were

told of the Father and the Son. That is about all we can comprehend now. I remember hearing Sam Hadley, of Water Street, say once: 'What do we tell these poor human wrecks who want help? Do we tell them about God? Not much; that frightens them. Do we tell them about the Holy Ghost? No; a man has to be pretty well along before he can understand about a Ghost. We tell them about *Jesus*. *Jesus was a man,* and they can understand him.' The most of us are in about the same predicament, I think, so we are not told much yet about the Holy Spirit. Our part is simply to obey him as he tells us of the Christ."

Motherhood and the Trinity

"I want to ask a question," said the Mill Superintendent, "and I don't know as it is at all pertinent, and it may be it is hardly reverent. Is there anything that corresponds to motherhood in the being of God?"

"Of course," replied Professor Paul, "that raises the question whether the difference between fatherhood and motherhood is merely a difference of physical sex. I think we want to keep ever in mind what those fine old theological blacksmiths were after when they said God was without body or parts. The shame of Mormonism is not so much that they have given us a polygamous man as that they have asked us to worship a polygamous God —and have deified characteristics that are material and physical. But I think most of us feel that there is a subtle spiritual distinction, like different notes of music, between holy fatherhood and holy motherhood. I presume the exaltation of the Virgin Mary grew partly from a misunderstanding of the character of God, a forgetting of his Fatherhood and the tender pity of the Christ, but it may be it had its roots also in a heart hunger for motherhood in God.

"Now, what I have to say next, I say with quite a little chastened agnosticism and yet also much eager confidence—I have thought the Holy Spirit is the mother-element of the Deity. I acknowledge there is more reverent imagination in this than in anything I have told you before. This is not clearly stated to us like the Fatherhood of God or the Saviourhood of Jesus, but there is a certain poetic appropriateness to that very lack, for real motherhood is always modest, always getting out of sight itself and seeking to glorify the Father and the Son.

"And if you have in mind this theory —if you choose to call it such—you can see a likeness in what we may call the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of the true mother. You remember that old account of the beginning of life—that the Spirit of God *brooded* on the face of the water. And you know when you stop to think of it that we all believe that all life, material life, intel-

lectual life, spiritual life, is 'born of the Spirit of God'—that the very life of the Spirit Divine goes into it, and that is what makes all life so mysterious, so wonderful, and so glorious. You recall also that in our Christian life we are 'led by the Spirit,' chastened by the Spirit, and taught by the Spirit. And if by this conception we could dispossess that notion 'filled with the Spirit' of its meaningless neutrality, not to say from materialism, degenerating sometimes, as our brother has said, into a crude foolishness, and make it like the experience of William McKinley when he sent the immortal telegram, 'Tell mother I'll be there,' I think it would be eminently worth while."

"I remember that the Christian Science parody on the Lord's Prayer says Our Father—Mother—God, but I always supposed that referred to Mother Eddy," remarked the Commercial Traveler.

"I think that is hardly fair to them

to so interpret it. I think they too are heart-hungry for motherhood in God," was the Professor's reply.

"In that intensely personal book by Professor Olin A. Curtis on The Christian Faith," suggested the Pastor, "I remember in his discussion of the Holy Spirit he says that he despairs of making a generation that utterly refuses to accept the Pauline conception of a home understand what he conceived to be the function of the Holy Spirit, or something like that. What do you think he means?"

"I suppose," and Professor Paul smiled, "that he meant a generation of militant suffragettes could not comprehend that the self-obliteration of the Holy Spirit had any connection with divine motherhood; and perhaps we shall have to say—and I trust I am reverent—that the Holy Spirit is an old-fashioned Mother. May I just call your attention to the utter unselfishness of the Trinity? Each is everlastingly

living for the others—and glorifying the others."

"I believe," remarked the Mill Superintendent, "I could worship a God like that more honestly than I could one who is always advertising his own glory."

Professor Paul's expressive face shone like that of Moses of old, and he said: "Once I heard John B. Gough speak on motherhood, and he said something like this: 'Young man, you say you will go through fire and water for your mother. She doesn't want you to do that. She wants you to come home a little earlier evenings.' So I rather guess that our discussion this evening should have a similar practical conclusion. Whatever may be the mystery of the Spirit's nature, whether our interpretation is correct or not, I am sure we are doing the will of the Spirit when we live the Christian life. That is the passion of the mother heart of God."

VI. THE BIBLE

"NEXT week let us take up the subject of Higher Criticism." It was the Pastor who made the suggestion.

"Not on your life," retorted the Commercial Traveler. "This is a class meeting. It is not a theological cemetery."

"I think perhaps it would be more appropriate and would satisfy the desire of our brother, the Pastor, if we should consider for a little while the Bible next week," said Professor Paul. The Pastor, it may be remarked, was a little proud—in a perfectly ministerial, righteous sense—of being a "conservative" in matters of current Bible discussion and was a little suspicious of what he considered certain liberal tendencies of the good Professor. He had, perhaps, a hope, inherited from his huntsmen ancestors, of being able to ensnare

him. The laymen, who were bent on avoiding just such a preachers'-meeting performance and making their informal gatherings together practically helpful, were, therefore, a little anxious as they gathered around the study fire the next Monday evening.

"All Scripture Is Given by Inspiration"

"I propose as the starting point for the evening this text," said the Pastor. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

"That's a good place to start," remarked the Professor, with a twinkle in his eye. "Where do you want to go?"

"*I* don't want to go anywhere," said the Pastor. "I am satisfied to settle every question the critics may bring up by that text."

"That is a good text," replied the Professor. "I think it is a fine text for our evening's sermon, but using it as a proof that the Bible is inspired is like being sure a man is honest because he says so himself. I think most of us would want some other evidence. That particular statement may not be absolutely true, and so for purposes of argument let us say it is surely possible that this particular text is not inspired, and then everything is unsettled all over again. I guess most of the fakers and charlatans of the ages have made just as positive statements regarding their own inspiration and been eager to settle things by that statement.

"Moreover, that word 'scripture,' if I remember correctly, has not in the original the same meaning as it has with us. It simply means 'writing,' that which is written. We would hardly want to say that all writings are given by inspiration of God, and are, therefore, ready for the more accurate trans-

lation of the Revised Version, 'Every scripture [or writing] inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work,' which is a test of the inspiration of the Scripture that is scientific and pragmatic and wholesome."

The Doctor's Question

For the first time the Physician, who was always a thoughtful listener, asked a question. "You mean you are willing to rest your argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures on what they do for folks, in making them righteous and furnishing them for good works?"

"Yes—only I hardly call it an argument, because I don't need one. I am willing to risk the immortality of the precious old Book on its fruits."

"Do you mean," asked the Pastor, "that you accept the statement that we are to read the Bible just as we would

any other book and judge it the same way?"

"If Phillips Brooks were alive and were to come to town to speak, it would be impossible for me to go to hear him as I would any other man. The influence of his holy ministry has so filled the land that it would, of necessity, create in me a different mood as I went to hear him. But I would judge his words by what they accomplished and not by what he said about himself—or any theory his fellow churchmen might manufacture about his peculiar episcopal sanctity. I think you see the comparison," said the Professor.

"What would you think of the statement," persisted the Pastor, "made by a young man to an ordaining council, 'I know the Bible is true simply because it finds me'?"

"I would say," and the Professor smiled indulgently, "let him alone; he will grow. It is characteristic of the bumptiousness of youth to speak in the

first person singular. Some day he will see that the Bible has done some more remarkable things than finding him—his father and mother, the holy apostles, prophets and martyrs and the church of all ages will loom up as at least equally important."

"But," the Physician spoke again, "if the test of the inspiration of writings is what they accomplish for human betterment, why single out the Bible as a particular sacred book? There are certainly other books that may make the same claim of inspiration?"

"Certainly," was the reply, "and I should hate to think that the literary ability of the Spirit Divine was exhausted in one volume. To say nothing of the sacred books of various religions, which certainly show signs and bear fruits to a certain degree of inspiration, some modern writers and prophets belong in the same class. Indeed, I modestly think I have felt a touch or two of inspiration myself. The peculiar

thing about the Bible is not so much the unique fullness of inspiration of its writers—although I think none of us who are thoughtful will deny that—as the peculiar purpose of it. The Bible writers occupy the same place in religious literature that the discoverers occupy in science and history. Men may travel as bravely as old Columbus, but they can never be the discoverer of America! He who should advertise to do that would but expose his own foolishness!

"The Bible writers, by the aid of the Spirit, discovered for the world the revelation of the heart of God, his salvation and his kingdom, 'which things the angels desire to look into.' Herein lies the glory of the Book," and the Professor's voice rang out in gladness. "Here we have a body of literature—literature of all kinds. We have history, prophecy, proverb, poetry, epistle, biography, and dreams. And we sometimes are favored with long discourses

as to which is which. This literature was written by different human authors, men of all ages, who were typical men of their ages, and yet it somehow fits together like the different parts of a picture puzzle and unitedly shows us the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That is what makes it so wonderful, and that is what makes it so divine.

"All parts are not of equal importance. Some, like the little gray cardboards of the puzzle, simply help to make the background of the face—but the centuries come and the centuries go, and still the heart of the church does not see a single part that needs to be left out when properly understood in connection with the whole—and while many fine things, dripping with divine inspiration, have been written, no man has come—nor woman either—who has the right to belong to the immortal company of the discoverers. The age of discovery has passed. The great conti-

nent has been found. Our work is to explore and to cultivate!"

An Infallible Directory of Eternal Life

"In what sense is the Bible, then, infallible?" asked the Mill Superintendent.

"I think there has never been a better answer to that question than the answer of Joseph Cooke—'It is the infallible directory to eternal life.' What we need to have in life is not an iron-clad rule, but a fellowship with Him who said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' This is what the Bible unerringly reveals. But here also in steering away from Scylla we may capsize on Charybdis unless we watch out. A fellowship with Christ is not merely a mystical, emotional thing. How can two walk together unless they agree? There must be the deliberate acceptance of his teaching—and the teaching of those who were under the spell of his personality

and were helped by the Spirit to interpret his teaching and apply it to life. On matters of the Christian revelation of life and duty and destiny I conceive the teachings of the Scripture, when properly understood, to be an infallible authority—if you like that old-fashioned word. Here, again, you need to remember my comparison to the picture puzzle and take things in their connection, and not take a piece of card, that is simply intended as part of the background, for the picture of the face—like some of the chapters in the Old Testament—as if it were part of the face itself."

"How can we always know?" asked the Physician.

" 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,' was the reverent answer. " 'And he, the Spirit of truth, will guide you into all truth.' "

VII. CONVERSION

THE coming in of the Pastor, although it threatened at first to bring too much of the spirit of controversy into the peaceful, eager group of truth-seekers, proved to be a source of real spiritual blessing. He was an earnest "minister of Jesus Christ," whose very presence was a moral tonic. His people might not always agree with his opinions—these are days when it is no crime to differ from a minister—but they were always glad to have him around. Moreover, there was needed some one with the pastoral attitude to give the finest tone to the class. Even district superintendents and theological professors need a pastor around to shepherd their souls.

It was in response to the suggestion of the Pastor that the next meeting was devoted to the subject of "Conversion,"

and began with a frank relation of Christian experience that made it resemble much the old-time class meeting.

How They Came

The Mill Superintendent spoke first of the happy day when the burden of his soul rolled away. It was a typical old-fashioned Methodist prayer-meeting testimony of spiritual crisis, told with a quiet earnestness that was compelling, and when he finished there was an eloquent silence more expressive than any uttered "Amen."

"I have a different story to tell," said the Commercial Traveler, "and it is certainly less dramatic. My mother was an earnest Christian woman, who deeply loved the church. She early surrounded my life with all its sacred ministrations. My child soul drank it all in. I was doubtless in an unusual sense naturally religious. Needless to say, I was not naturally good, and the problem of my life was to connect the ideals

and emotions of my religious life with my everyday conduct and disposition. Sometimes I failed at this; sometimes I succeeded. I can't remember when I didn't try. When I was a lad of eleven I joined the church. I do not know as that particular event meant so very much to me at the time, but it has meant much to me since to be inside. I had during my unfolding boyhood days several times of positive consecration and confession, several periods which I might characterize as rapid *growing times,* and all I can say now is, as said the apostle, 'By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ I am what I am,' and in the words of the fine old song, 'The Spirit led unerring to the land I hold to-day.' "

The Physician spoke next: "My brother says he has a different story to tell. I sometimes think I have no story at all to tell. I confess I always feel embarrassed in a service of this sort. I was not brought up a Christian, al-

though from my earliest life I have tried to keep myself morally clean. I went to church because my wife was a church member and because I believed it to be an institution men ought to support. I was made a trustee long before I joined. Then we had a pastor who asked me to become a member of the church. He was no mere roll-padder and I knew he meant he wanted me to publicly confess myself a disciple of Jesus Christ. I asked him to give me a few days to think it over. I did think seriously. I saw that the church was really a company of men who were banded together to live the kind of a life I had honestly been trying to live—brave and clean, honest and kind. I saw, on the other hand, that in my endeavor to live that kind of a life I had come more and more, as the years passed by, to depend not on myself, but on a certain something near to us all which the church folks confessed to be the grace of Christ. I could not see,

then, why I should stay away from communion any longer. The next Sunday I joined the church. I don't know as I felt or acted very differently afterward, except that more and more I have seen the great Helper of my life to be personal, real and divine."

Mary Willard's Way

"One of the best definitions of what conversion really means, I have ever seen," responded Professor Paul, "is given by Mary Willard, the sister of the famous Frances E. Willard, in extracts from her girlish journal, given in the book Nineteen Beautiful Years. She wrote something like this: 'God commands me to love him with all my heart, and I think I can do it, *if I am helped.*' Of course we all know that word 'conversion' is largely a conventional and ecclesiastical term. Jesus did not use it often; when he did it was to tell those tough old self-righteous Pharisees that they needed to be con-

verted—or turned around—and made like little children. If one cares to study words, it is interesting to notice that about the only folks that Jesus said needed to be converted were the most religious people of his time. But the favorite expression of Jesus was life—'eternal' life—using that word 'eternal,' as I believe, not so much to describe its duration as its spiritual quality. The summary of the teaching of Jesus as to life and what we call Christian experience is very simple and very interesting. First, we have his rules of daily living—homely in their simplicity, having to do largely with how we treat those with whom we come in daily contact, a simple life of practical goodness, sincerity, and kindness. Then we are told by a hundred beautiful metaphors that the source of that life must be the Christ. He is the bread we must eat, the water we must drink, the vine we must spring from if we would live that life—if we would develop in our souls

that spiritual quality of life that will enable us to live out the Sermon on the Mount. And we are to secure his help, not by saying long creeds and prayers, but by earnestly desiring his friendship and seeking it humbly and sincerely.

"And Paul, who is the great interpreter of the message of the Christ, says the same thing. It seems as if Paul were careful not to degenerate into the use of any mere conventional word in describing Christian experience. He rarely, if ever, uses our word 'conversion.' He says of the Ephesians that they were made alive in Christ, he talks to the Romans about being adopted into God's family, and so on. The thing he is ever insisting on is the same thing Jesus had talked about—that spiritual quality of life that comes from fellowship with Jesus Christ, that bears fruit in practical goodness."

"I have been wondering while you were talking about Christ's conversation with Nicodemus. Is there not

there an insistence on a definite, clear-cut crisis like a new birth?" It was the District Superintendent who asked this question.

"I think," was the reply, "that the emphasis there is rather upon the *life* than the crisis. You know, of course, that the better translation for every purpose is not 'Except a man be born again,' but 'Except a man be *born from above.*' The important thing is not being able to say, 'I didn't use to have this life; now I have,' although many can say this. The important thing is living so that it is evident now that there is a life from above, divine in its source and quality. Of course if a man has not this life—if he is living a life low, earthly, sensual, and selfish, according to the course of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience—he needs a crisis, a tremendous one—and on this Jesus and the apostles everlastingly insist; but if he turns about and seeks Christ, glori-

ous as that day may be, the important thing about then and all the days after is not the turning, but the quality of the life in his soul."

"In connection with that chapter," said the District Superintendent, "how do you interpret the words 'born of water and the Spirit'?"

"Born of Water and the Spirit"

"You know, of course," replied the Professor, "that the Greek word for Spirit is the same as that for the wind that was then blowing where it listed in the treetops. I think Jesus was speaking in the mystic poetry of the Orient, was playing a little on words, too, and by the use of the two words, 'water' and 'wind,' was describing the two leading characteristics of the life of the Spirit—cleansing and inspiration! And, dear brethren," and the Professor beamed on the thoughtful assembly, "if we have these characteristics of this life, however it has come to us—and the methods

of approach are as various as the human family—we may be grateful and glad."

The Pastor looked a little puzzled. "But does faith in the blood of Christ have no necessary part in it?"

"Of course we cannot secure this life without faith—an intensely moral faith too, by the way—that makes us repent of our sins and make restitution where we can. No man can have Jesus for a friend and helper unless he is everlastingly determined not to be bad—a faith also that leads a man by prayer and obedience to place his right side up, so God can make it run over. As to the blood of Christ—no man can believe in the Atonement more intensely than I do, and you will remember from our discussion of it how vital a part I believe it plays in the transformation of our disposition; but it is not necessary for you to know all about aqueducts before you drink the water from my mountain spring. You could not have

it were it not for the aqueduct—but your part is to drink it."

"Just one question more, Professor," asked the Mill Superintendent. "My conversion, which I described, makes me glad every time I think of it and gives a deep emotional undertone to my religious life that is very satisfactory. Do those and can those who have not had my great emotional crisis have this?"

"I think I will reply in the words of the apostle," said the Professor, "and as I recite his words see how many of them describe experiences that are emotional and also how naturally he glides from what is emotional to what is practical and ethical. I think he says it all: 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.' "

VIII. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

It would be impossible, even in these days of the passing of the old labels, to have a company of Methodists together for serious discussion very long without some question being asked which would necessitate the discussion of the subject at the head of this chapter. As the old song says about the Indians, "Their name is on your rivers; ye cannot rub them out."

At the sixth meeting of the class, at the suggestion of one of the laymen whom, like the "lost Lenore," we are content to leave "nameless here forevermore," the practical meaning of entire sanctification was the topic of conversation.

"When I graduated from the theological school," said the Pastor, "in my graduation address I said it was the

glory of Methodism that she has ever taught that a man can get somewhere in Christian experience. I remember a learned, restless-eyed, middle-aged preacher came to me afterward and somewhat sarcastically remarked, 'When you get there you let me know.' "

"It may be, of course," said the Professor, "as is frequently the case, you were talking about different things. There is a sense in which I suppose we shall be everlastingly on the road, and it is a splendid fact that Methodists, even when their hearts were hottest, have been careful to declare that by the blessing of entire sanctification they do not mean the end of development, but simply a perfect growing condition. I think, however, if you have quoted yourself correctly you properly estimated Methodism's glory. Only I would remember also the best definition of Methodism, 'Christianity in earnest,' and broaden out a little. If an experience

is peculiarly Methodist, it is not of any value except to the curio hunter. If it is as wide as Christianity, it is doubtless as high as heaven in its origin. I say, therefore, that it is the glory of Christianity that it has ever taught that a man can get somewhere in moral character and spiritual power."

"What is it to be entirely sanctified?" asked the Mill Superintendent, in his usual direct fashion.

"I think you will see from all my discussions of the Christian life," replied the Professor, "that the more intensely personal it is the more genuinely vital it becomes. We have seen that the power of the Atonement is that by fellowship with the personal Christ we appropriate the benefits of great experiences. He endured vicariously for us. The blood of Christ does not chemically cleanse us. The constant heart beat against ours of the self-sacrificing Christ does. You will remember also our discussion of the selfishness of hu-

man nature. My thought of entire sanctification is that it is such a constant fellowship with Christ as to have daily victory over all the selfish tendencies of human nature—and that is certainly the great purpose of our great salvation."

"Do you believe in eradication or suppression?" asked the District Superintendent.

"I don't know as I know enough about human nature to believe in either. I mean just as some people make me good *clear through* to have them around, so the abiding presence of the Christ works with me."

"Do you believe in the second blessing?" asked the Mill Superintendent.

The Second Blessing

"I believe that most men are apt to advance by a series of crises toward God. Even our intellectual life has its rapid growing times. I can recall a few weeks in my early ministry that changed

my whole intellectual vision and theological outlook. I suppose the experience of those weeks was not really a sudden creation any more than the sudden bloom of the apple orchard is the work of a single night. There was a long period of preparation of root and limb and leaf and bud. It is just the same way in our spiritual life. You remember that John Wesley, in his famous 'Plain Account,' with a psychology that is crude, yet struck an eternal note because he kept so close to actual experience. He said, in effect, 'I cannot tell how God might work, but this is the way I have seen him do it,' and then tells how, after a man has become a Christian (I strip his words of their ancient theological garb), he goes on steadily growing for some time, struggling and singing, and then there comes to him a vision of what he may be if he has a constant sense of the abiding presence of Christ. For this he prays and this he obtains. That is, I take it,

what you mean by the second blessing. In that sense I believe in it—in the Wesleyan sense that I have seen God frequently work that way. Indeed, I may go farther and confess to you I have had some experience along that line myself, but always the important thing is not how the vision, the prayer, and the answer come, but whether now the love and the presence of the vicarious Christ so stay with a body as to constantly shame out his selfishness."

"Is entire sanctification the same thing as the baptism with the Holy Spirit?" asked the Physician.

Some Earnest Inquiries

"You will remember our little talk about the Spirit. His work is to remind us constantly of Christ. When we are filled with a sense of the love and presence in our lives of the Christ, we may safely conclude, to use an old-fashioned phrase, that the Holy Spirit is the instrument—the baptism with the

Spirit, if you please. In all these words we are struggling with bungling theological phrases and lifeless human words to describe the indescribable life of God."

"I confess," said the Physician, "I have never been very much interested in this subject, anyway. As I take it, if a man lives a sincere, honest, Christian life, he will land in heaven. I guess that is all I can attend to, with all my business."

The Professor smiled, but said: "I like to remember the words in the prayer of Jesus, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself.' If a body is interested in this or any blessing, just as the small boy wants to sample the different drinks at a soda fountain—and some are (I have seen them come glibly forward at an altar call, to just see how a new blessing would feel)—he is an unhealthy and one-sided Christian; but if for the sake of others, like the Christ, for the sake of giving the wistful, watch-

ful world a shining sample of how radiant Christ can make life, we seek the deepest fellowship with him, we are indeed keeping company with Him who said, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself.' "

"What I want to know," said the Commercial Traveler, "is what we fellows ought to do about it. I confess my short-comings and long-stayings. How am I going to make the apple orchard in my soul blossom?"

"I suppose," said the Professor, "that blossoms cannot be forced, but the right climate does help. I remember that in Paul's prayer for the Ephesians that 'Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith,' which is the very thing I am talking about, and I am frank to say seems to me more electric with life than saying the 'blessing of sanctification,' there was considerable fixing up of the dwelling. It had to be rooted and grounded in love and strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man to be able

to accommodate the constant tenant. This is the case where I think probably the old challenge of the prophet, 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you,' is timely. If you are prayerfully and trustfully and obediently eager for the grounding and the strengthening, I do not believe God will disappoint you. There is, I think, a tremendous moral back action to any forward step in the way of blessing—and seeking the higher levels of Christian life and love will call for a fairly thorough review of your whole attitude toward God and the ideals of his gospel. He is not going to make you any better than you want to be."

IX. PRAYER

It was the Monday after the Sunday designated by the President as a day of prayer for our country. The thoughts of the men present turned naturally to the subject of prayer, and the Commercial Traveler broke out with the question, "Professor Paul, what good does it do to pray, anyway? Is it possible for us to pray in such a way that we get everything we ask?"

"You have asked two questions in a rapid-fire fashion, as if they belonged together, when as a matter of fact one belongs in life's kindergarten, and I guess we won't be able to fully answer the other until we get into the post-graduate course," replied the Professor.

"Start us in the kindergarten, Professor," said the Physician. "That is where I feel that I belong in this praying business."

A Kindergarten on Prayer

"The kindergarten question is the one about whether we may pray so as to get everything we ask. I like to remember that Jesus grounded his whole doctrine of prayer on the great fact of the Fatherhood of God. He said, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to those that ask him?' Then he goes on to say —or I guess he has said it before—if a son asks bread his father will not give him a stone, nor if he asks fish, a serpent. It ought also to be evident that if he asks for a serpent, he will not give him one. I remember reading of a woman who was lying in a hammock reading a novel when her little child began to cry. Without looking up, somewhat impatiently she told the nurse maid to give the child what he wanted. The maid protested, but the mother in-

sisted. Thereupon the cries became a shriek, and the nurse grimly remarked, 'He has it, mum; it's a hornet.' Now, I reckon I could find in several of my old diaries an account of some hornets I have prayed for, and to-day I thank God those prayers were not answered.

"I think it is Harriet Beecher Stowe who says that all progress has been in spite of the earnest prayer of some pure souls who have prayed against it. Of course we know that Tories prayed against Washington, that pure Southern mothers prayed against Lincoln—you remember the pleasant little theological fiction that God had to take Stonewall Jackson out of the world because he could never let the cause of the Union triumph with that man storming heaven with his prayer. I do not doubt that there are sincere Germans to-day praying for the final victory of the Kaiser. You see," and the Professor looked around and smiled, "that to run the prayer department of

this universe is no small task—but all the prayers, whether a child praying for a toy, or the sincere soul travail of a nation on its knees, must be considered up in heaven from the standpoint of holy Fatherhood.

"That explains also why some of our prayers are not speedily answered. I remember once when I was in the academy, as a student, I got behind in my Latin on account of sickness. Now, I knew that the teacher had a teacher's edition, sort of a proper pedagogical pony with the translation under each line. It occurred to me if I borrowed that I could catch up with the class, so I asked the teacher if I might take it, telling her the reason. She blushed at my knowledge of her possession and refused my request, but showed me instead a slow, plodding way of making up my work. I did not think so then, but now I know she was a good teacher. She knew the only benefit that could come from studying Latin was from

studying Latin, that it was only what it did for me that makes it worth while at all.

"And because God is a good Father, he does not speedily answer the prayers of his elect who cry unto him day and night. He knows that the development of our character as sons of God is more important than the immediate granting of our requests."

"Yet," interrupted the Pastor, "our brother's question was whether it is not possible to pray in such a way that we get everything we ask. If we truly say with our hearts the conditional clause, 'If it be thy will,' may not his question be answered in the affirmative?"

"I suppose there might be some question as to whether, under these circumstances, a man could be said to really get what he was really praying for—although, of course, there are both a grammatical and a theological sense in which you are right, and I am reminded of the lines of Whittier:

" 'And so sometimes I think our prayers
Might well be merged in one,
And nest and perch and hearth and church
Repeat, "Thy will be done." '

"Putting it that way," exclaimed the Commercial Traveler, "what's the use of praying at all? One of the finest old men I ever knew said he didn't. He said the Lord knew what he needed, anyway, and gave it to him before he asked, so he guessed he wouldn't bother him or take any of his time by talking to him."

"But we are commanded to pray," said the Pastor.

"Not only by our Bible, but by our hearts," remarked the Mill Superintendent, "We almost can't help it."

"Both of these commands must have some reason behind them," replied Professor Paul, "and here again I think we find the answer in that great fact on which Jesus grounded all his talk about prayer—the *Fatherhood of God.* If God is just a mill superintendent, he

may want to run things without any suggestion from his employees, but if he is a Father, he is heart-hungry for fellowship with his children."

"If a man is a mill superintendent, he gets suggestions from his employees in these days whether he wants them or not," replied the Mill Superintendent himself, "and if they come from the right sort, he is a better superintendent because of it."

"And I am a better teacher if I get suggestions from my students," said the Professor. "I don't mean that I follow them; I usually don't, but it is good for a teacher to get his student's viewpoint. It promotes fellowship. Our brother, the Pastor, is a better minister if his people talk with him—and so on. And why should not this same fellowship idea apply to our Father, God? I don't mean that he needs to have us give him points, but that since it is his plan that we shall be workers together with him in bringing in his kingdom, it

shall be best for all of us to be bound together by ties of fellowship that only prayer can bring."

Prayer and Omniscience

"One thing you seem to be forgetting, Professor," said the Physician, "and it was suggested by what was said about that old man who didn't pray because the Lord knew beforehand all about him. If God is omniscient—that is, really so, you know—then he can have fellowship with us without praying. He knows the thoughts of our hearts."

"I was hoping you would ask that question, Doctor," was the reply, "because that will best bring out two things I wanted to say, and they really are in answer to the question that I said at the start we could really not answer fully until we take life's postgraduate course. The first is that the law of expression is the law of life. I mean that I doubt if we really think a thing until we say

it or pray it. I mean that saying it or praying it drives it into our soul and makes it part of us as it was not before. And the other is that you have been thinking all the time that the supreme purpose of prayer is not that our Father, God, may know us, but that we may know him. By praying, by finding out in praying that Tennyson was right when he said,

> "'. . . Spirit with spirit can meet—
> Closer is He than breathing, and
> nearer than hands or feet,'

you really get acquainted with God, and the moral and spiritual reaction of such an acquaintance in your life gets your soul in such shape that if your prayer is a worth-while one—and the other kind lops off naturally in such a fellowship—you are able to receive its answer. That, as I understand it, is the real philosophy of prayer and answers our question, 'What good does it do to pray?' "

"Only partly," insisted the Physician. "That answers, I am very frank to say, the query as to why I should pray for myself. This whole discussion started from the fact that yesterday we all prayed for our country. We have not yet touched the question as to why we should pray for others, and yet, as I understand it, as we advance in Christian living, more and more of our praying is that sort. Didn't somebody say,

" 'Lord, help me to live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer shall be for others'?

"You know, I said at the beginning one of our questions could not be fully answered. This is not to be wondered at when we remember how many of the forces of life, material as well as spiritual, are still wrapped in mystery. I was reading the other day that Mark Twain said he never wrote anything original, that nobody ever did. He

seemed to think that ideas are floating around in the atmosphere, as it were; that when we write we simply reach out our hand and draw into the belfry of our brains some carrier-pigeon that somebody else sent out with a message tied to its leg and write down the message in our own words—that is all! You will remember how poor Helen Keller was accused of plagiarism because she wrote almost the same words that had been printed before.

"It is interesting to notice in the study of literary history that whenever we have one poet we usually have a group of them. The same in philosophy and oratory and science. It seems as if a man who is truly intellectual generates a certain intellectual power, as if a wave of influence went from him to others.

"We don't know enough about telepathy yet to ground our doctrine of intercessory prayer on it. In fact, we know more about prayer. But why

may not a truly praying man generate a social and moral power that God can use and does use in the world of folks? I believe for me to pray for my country is worth while because I am part of it. I believe for me to pray for my neighbor is worth while because I am part of him too. I mean that he and I are somehow united in a subtle, spiritual way, and the winds of God will carry pollen from the blossoms in my soul to the blossoms in his. There is no doubt about it that this kind of prayer is one of God's choicest ways of bringing in his kingdom. I remember that Professor Coe once said, 'No man can really pray and leave the universe the way it was before.' "

"I suggest that before we go," said the Mill Superintendent, "we may kneel and pray together for our country."

There was a reverent and ready response, and who can doubt that when the final records are written the angel

who keeps the books will underscore it with gold as one of the forces that kept the ship of state from foundering on the bleak gale that was blowing that night?

X. WHAT IS THE TEACHING OF JESUS ABOUT HELL?

"I WAS over at the meetings in the tabernacle the other night," said the Mill Superintendent, as the little group of men gathered for their Monday meeting in Professor Paul's cozy study, "and heard the evangelist. He seems to be doing good work, and I think we ought to help him. One thing that I noticed —and that is why I speak of it here— was his frequent use of the word 'hell.' In fact, it seemed to me he was a little too free in damning people, although I had to acknowledge it seemed to me most of the time he was correctly disposing of the appropriate crowd; but another thing that impressed me was that there was no profound impression made by his anathemas. The people seemed neither frightened nor saddened. In fact, some of them, I could see, en-

joyed it all very much and all seemed to accept it simply as fine specimens of emphatic and lurid rhetoric. That led me to wondering as to what we really believe about hell, and, what is more important still, what, so far as we can ascertain, is the truth, as taught in the Bible."

"I venture to suggest a narrower field of discussion than that," replied Professor Paul. "Suppose we make the subject of our study to-night, 'What is the teaching of Jesus about hell?' That will be less diffuse and more definite and will accomplish all that a more elaborate study of the Bible, as a whole, would do, which, of course, would take more than one evening. On this subject I think we can let Jesus speak the last word."

"On every subject," interrupted the Pastor.

The Last Word

"I am not so sure of that," was the

thoughtful reply. "Did Jesus not say that there were some things his disciples could not bear while he was with them? The doctrine of the Atonement, the coming of the Holy Spirit and some of the most precious truths of Christian experience could not be fully told until after Calvary and Pentecost. Here we need the teaching of the Acts and Epistles to supplement the sayings of our Lord. Also for some doctrines—I think especially the doctrines of the coming of the Kingdom—we need the message of the unfolding scroll of history in which the Spirit of Truth has been at work. You remember that Lowell says:

" 'Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves, nor leaves of stone.
Each age, each kindred adds a verse to it—
Texts of hope, or despair, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,

While thunder surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit.'

"But when it comes to truths that have to do with the eternal world, with heaven or with hell, I seriously question if we have received any additional light since Jesus taught by Galilee. We may find in Christian biography and possibly in science, as time goes on, some confirmation of the same. But our present need, as it seems to me, is to Orientalize ourselves, put ourselves, as far as possible, in the land and the time when Jesus spoke, find out what his word pictures meant to the people of that time, and consequently what they should mean to us."

"Hades"

"That is what I want to know," exclaimed the Commercial Traveler. "While you have been speaking, I have been looking in my Testament, and I

find this text: 'Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; whosoever shall call his brother, Raca shall be in danger of the council; whosoever shall say 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire.' "

"There are two words that are translated 'hell' in the Authorized Version of the New Testament," said the Professor. "One is 'hades,' and simply means the spirit world, the land where are those that we call dead. When Peter was preaching about Jesus at Pentecost, he quoted a psalm about not leaving his soul in hell. In that case he used the word 'hades,' and simply means that Jesus, our conquering Christ, did not stay dead. That was also the thought of the old line of the creed, 'He descended into hell.' Jesus used that word in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He says: 'In hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.' That does not mean that hades necessarily

implied 'torment,' for if he had happened to describe the place where Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom he would also have called it Hades. I do not think we can build a doctrine of either heaven or hell on that parable. That was a parable told, not to give information about the unseen world, but to teach those money-loving Jews that God heard the cry of the poor and that the selfish rich who heard not Moses and the prophets and the poor beggar would reverse positions in 'the land of things as they are.' To emphasize the truth Jesus used the poetic imagery of a heaven with Abraham in charge, and a hell in sight of it with which the people of that time were familiar, just as he had in the parable before used the rather questionable proceeding of the unjust steward to emphasize his lesson of practical shrewdness."

"Gehenna"

"The other word that is used for 'hell'

—and the usual word of Jesus—is 'gehenna.' As I hinted at the start, to understand this we need to Orientalize ourselves, to go back to the land and the time when Jesus was teaching. There was outside the city of Jerusalem a valley known as Gehenna, of the valley of the sons of Hinnim. It was here that wicked King Manasseh had practiced his cruel idolatrous orgies and compelled his sons to go through the fire. Later a king with the zeal of reform upon him had, as the record tersely says, 'defiled it.' It became the place where the dead bodies of animals and criminals were thrown, and later all kinds of refuse. It was the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Fires, of course, were kept burning to keep conditions at all sanitary. No doubt this place was used in the time of Jesus as a type of moral ruin. Whether it was or not, Jesus so uses it—and the summary of his teaching is this: *Don't live the kind of a life so that your final end will be*

in the moral refuse heap of the universe. That, as I understand it, is the teaching of Jesus about hell."

His Emphasis

"What about the question of the eternity of the punishment?" asked the Pastor.

"Time is such a relative thing," was the thoughtful reply. "On the one hand, some moments in life seem almost age long. On the other hand, a man can get used to things. If a man could get used to State's prison in time, he might get used to hell in eternity. You understand, of course, that is rather melancholy comfort. But I do not believe that the emphasis of the teaching of Jesus is at all upon the matter of duration, which is, as I have said, a purely relative thing. His emphasis is on the finality of moral ruin. I have never felt that the burden of the message of Jesus was that unless you are good a little while here you will suffer

like an eternal headache or heartache forever. I remember I heard a good woman say in prayer meeting that she approved of 'unsaved people' going to the theater and having all the good times they could here, because they would not have any hereafter. No! here is what Jesus taught: There is what you *may* be, a son of God, like him in the great purpose of your life and the spirit of your soul, and *there is what you are,* a heap of moral rottenness, fit only for the refuse pile of the valley of Gehenna, 'where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.'

"Pastor, reach over there and pass me my Lowell from that book shelf, please." This done, he opened it and said, "Here, men, listen to this. The name of the poem is 'Extreme Unction,' and here is what it says:

" 'Upon the hour when I was born
God said, "Another man shall be,"
And the great Maker did not scorn
Out of Himself to fashion me;

He sunned me with His ripening looks
And heaven's rich instincts in me grew,
As effortless as woodland nooks
Send violets up and paint them blue.

" 'Yes, I who now with angry tears
Am exiled back to brutish clod
Have borne unquenched for fourscore years
A spark of the eternal God;
And to what end? How yield I back
The trust for such high uses given?
Heaven's light hath but revealed a track
Whereby to crawl away from heaven. . . .

" " . . . I flung away
Those keys that might have open set
The golden sluices of the day,
But clutch the keys of darkness yet;
I hear the reapers singing go
Into God's harvest; I that might
With them have chosen, here below
Grope shuddering at the gates of night.

" 'O glorious Youth, that once wast mine!
O high ideal! all in vain
Ye enter at this ruined shrine
Whence worship ne'er shall rise again.

The bat and owl inhabit here,
The snake nests in the altar stone,
The sacred vessels molder near,
The image of the God is gone.'

"That poem has caught in a remarkable degree the emphasis of the teaching of Jesus about hell, and when we go beyond that much, to borrow the expressive phrase of an old Negro preacher, we are trying to 'unscrew the inscrutable,' and weaken our message."

"WHO?" "YOU!"

After a thoughtful pause, the Commercial Traveler asked, "Professor Paul, who are going to hell?"

"I am glad you asked that question, because we need to think of it," said the Professor. "Because when we think of hell as moral ruin, we are apt to think of the coarser sins and forget those subtle spiritual qualities which when rubbed off the soul, like the down from the wings of a butterfly, cripple its flying capacities forever. The answer of

Jesus to your question is, I say it solemnly, 'Look out or you'll go there yourself!'

"Take the text you read to us at the start, for instance: 'Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause is in danger of judgment.' We hot-tempered fellows who have been hauled out to the bar of our conscience at night know what that means. 'Whosoever shall call his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council,' and you know that anybody who refuses to square his business ideals by the doctrine of the worthwhileness of human life is increasingly in danger of the council of aroused people in this world, to say nothing of the next. 'Whosoever says, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.' A fool is one incapable of reason or religion. The message is that if you are doing nothing for your brother's soul, *you* are in danger of going to hell—not *he* is, as the old-time evangelists have sometimes said to us—but Jesus says *you* are."

A MODERN METHODIST

"I think," remarked the Mill Superintendent, "we will need to pray,

"'Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely,
Assured if I my trust betray,
I shall forever die.'"

XI. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HEAVEN?

THERE was a great cloud of sorrow over the Monday meeting at the Professor's home. The Commercial Traveler, who had been the life of the class, at whose suggestion, indeed, the class had been formed, had, during the last week, suddenly stepped out into the eternities. His cheery greeting, his frank, manly questions and answers, the outshining of his sturdy soul would never again add their warm human atmosphere to their weekly gatherings. The men felt as did the poet when he said, "The soul of the summer had slipped away."

The fire in the open grate was burning brightly. Contrary to the usual custom, the Professor's wife brought in cups of steaming chocolate and plates

of dainty wafers. The men realized that she was led by the same spirit that used to make mother have extra delicious dessert when they first met some of life's disappointments in childhood's happy days, and were dumbly grateful.

The Only Question

The Commercial Traveler was so apt to be the one to open the discussions of the evening that there was naturally a long pause after the usual greetings. Finally the Mill Superintendent spoke, his voice trembling a little. "It's no use, Professor; there is only one question we want to talk about now—and I don't know as we can say much on that: *What do we know about heaven?* I don't mean its geography and that sort of thing, but do we absolutely know there is such a place and that good folks go there—or is it merely a dream born of an intense desire?"

"Yes," said the Physician, "I find even among good people a lack of cer-

tainty about it. Their creed seems to be:

" 'We came into life naked and bare.
We go through life with trouble and care.
We go from life nobody knows where.
If we live well here, 'twill be well with us there,'

(probably)—some even add 'possibly' instead!"

"This is a good time to discuss the subject," replied Professor Paul, "because the tragedy that has entered our little circle adds much human interest to it, although it occurs to me that always there is somebody who must be especially interested. You remember that our whole discussion of the things of the Spirit is based on a profound belief that God is our heavenly Father and we are his children. If that is true, the very longing for the life immortal is a fairly safe guarantee of its certainty. As Celia Thaxter said of the song of the sparrow, 'God never meant that song to mock us.' "

"I can see," replied the Mill Superintendent, thoughtfully, "that if what we have been saying during these happy weeks is correct, the next chapter to it all must be heaven, but an experience like this 'strains my cable' a little. I am kind of wondering if my anchor will hold. And I want to ask you two questions, Professor. The first one is this: Is there any proof positive and clear of the life immortal outside of the realm of religious faith? Do we find anywhere else, in science, for instance, anything that will make us know about life beyond death?"

"Of course you must remember," said Professor Paul, "that I am a professor of theology and perhaps I am not qualified to answer that question. I am aware, of course, of the recent investigation of Sir Oliver Lodge and others, but I think that the most science can give us up to date is what poetry has given us from the time poets have first dreamed and sung—that is what

Wordsworth calls 'Intimations of Immortality,' and some of the intimations are rather faint. In a loss like that which has come to our circle I do not think we get much comfort from science or anywhere else outside of the Christian faith!"

That Man Paul

"My other question is this," continued the Mill Superintendent: "Is the kind of certainty we get in the Christian religion a real practical certainty that will hold in the everyday world, or is it a hothouse, prayer-meeting affair? Can we men of the world among men of the world think and speak of the life beyond not merely as a pleasing possibility or a plausible probability, but as a real thing concerning which we know?"

"I remember," remarked the Pastor, "that the greatest Christian we know much about said when speaking of the heavenly life, 'We know.' "

"And he was no guesser nor dreamer, either, that man Paul," exclaimed the District Superintendent. "If he *knew,* he *knew.* Either he got on a higher hilltop than the rest of us and so could see farther, in which case I believe I would accept his testimony as quickly as that of any scientist I know about, or else we too may find his same glad certainty."

"There are," continued the Professor, "two distinct kinds of certainty. One is the mathematical certainty of the scientist and the logician, the Q. E. D. kind. Probably that is the kind of certainty people have in mind when they want us to prove the assertions of the Christian religion about the life beyond. And I would not say it cannot be done. At least we can affirm that it is a logical conclusion. If we have an arc, we can complete the circle, and if God's promises all verify themselves when conditions are met in human life here, it is certainly good mathematics

to 'reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed.' But I sometimes think we have wasted too much time and thought figuring for that kind of a certainty. The most that can give us is a logical conclusion on paper, with the ever-haunting fear that there may be, after all, some flaw in our logic, some error in our figuring. The teachings of Jesus and the apostles give no space nor attention to that kind of a quest for assurance. It is at its best a roundabout road, with many shadows.

The Higher Certainty

"The other kind of certainty—and life is full of it—it is not confined to religion—is the practical certainty of everyday life that does not need to be figured out and demonstrated. That is really the higher kind of certainty. 'My heart leaps up whene'er I see a rainbow in the sky,' is a much more positive

statement than 'I can give five reasons why I conclude that I see a rainbow.' The little girl who broke up the learned discussions of the scientists as to what a certain white powder could be by putting her moist finger in it and then putting said finger into her mouth and exclaiming, 'I know; it is sugar; just taste it,' was the surest one of the company. If it takes an argument to prove that a certain literary attempt is poetry, or that a certain sound is music, there is something the matter with the author, or the reader, with the performer or the audience. The child of a true home, drinking in its love as a flower drinks in the sunshine, does not need to have his father or mother prove their love. He experiences daily.

"I have sometimes listened to the earnest statement of my own little lad in convincing the neighbors' children of the truth of a certain statement. He will burst out with 'I know it's so, because my father says so!' It makes me

feel rather humble when I think of the time of disillusionment when he discovers I do not know it all. But if I were as great as my little boy thinks I am, there could be no greater certainty than that—*the promise of a father who never fails!*

"I know of no finer certainty in life than this—and if the sense of the love and presence of our Father in our lives is made real to us through Jesus Christ our Lord, his promise of the final home in his Word and in our hearts becomes like the rainbow we see in the sky or the lovelight in our mother's face, the highest kind of knowledge. The crude old hymn tells it all:

> " 'This I do find:
> We two are so joined
> He will not stay in glory
> And leave me behind.' "

"Then," said the Physician, "if we are sure of God and Christ, we are sure of heaven. And we are sure of them

in the same way we are of any other friends with whom we have daily experience."

"That is it," said Professor Paul. "I suppose that many people would like a certainty about the future life without a religious experience. In fact, many try to find it—but God knows that we need to find our Father before we find our home. He put first things first."

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